



WELCOME TO THE 22 – 23 SCHOOL YEAR!

You only had to be near a school bus, a playground, or a classroom last week to get a sense of back-to-school excitement across Haida Gwaii. I'm sure parents were equally excited to see their children return to school following a summer full of adventures.

Thankfully we are beginning this year far closer to an average September than we have for the previous two COVID years. The [K-12 Communicable Disease Guidelines](#) have been updated. Although COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our communities, high rates of vaccination combined with other measures means that the 22 – 23 school measures support the reduced risk of communicable disease in school settings.

As most of us return to shiny schools in September, we have a group of employees concluding hectic summer projects and finishing the deep cleaning at each of our schools. **A very big THANK YOU to all in this group, which includes staff from facilities, technology, custodial, transportation and business operations.** Your hard work is recognized and appreciated by all of us as we return to great-looking buildings!

Haawa to the many SD50 staff and locals within your communities who welcomed me warmly during my first visit to Haida Gwaii.



SD50 WELCOMES SOME NEW FACES & OLD FACES TO NEW ROLES

Although we are beginning to experience the anxiety associated with not being able to hire enough staff for a few of our positions, we are excited to welcome:

- **Colin Orchyk** - Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay Teacher
- **Rhea Botel** - Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay Teacher
- **Lia Hetherington** - Tahayghen Teacher
- **Solomon Mensah** - Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Teacher

We are also happy to welcome local experts who are teaching under 'letters of permission' for us which is very helpful given our current recruiting challenge. Thank

you to:

- **Ian McLean** - Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Teacher
- **Marjorie Fregin** - Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Teacher

Finally, a warm welcome to **Behn Cochrane**, who joins the SD50 leadership team as principal at Tahayghen Elementary School.



SD50 LEARNS WITH CHRISTINE FRASER

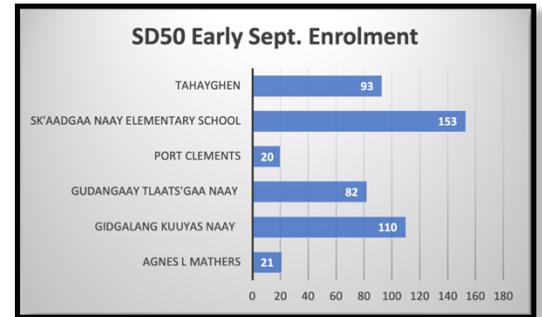
We are excited to be working with Christine Fraser, an Elementary Literacy specialist with Campbell River School District, for the 3rd year in a row. Christine will make three trips to Haida Gwaii this school year to work with interested elementary teachers on early literacy intervention strategies.

I will look forward to sharing stories from this learning throughout this year.



SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Like other rural and remote school districts across the province, Haida Gwaii has seen a steady decline in student enrolment over the last several years. This year we have 479 students enrolled, just slightly above the previous year's total. This may change somewhat between now and the end of Sept.



GUDANGAAY TLAATS'GAA NAAAY FIRST WEEK



WORLD CLASS FOOD PROGRAM

It is rare in British Columbia, if not Canada, to see a food program such as the one at Gudangaay Tlaats'Gaa Naay Secondary. Principal **Ian Keir** shared,

"GTN is well known for its school food program, and this year, we got off to a great start with foods classes making

*lunches for everyone on the first and second days of school. Under the guidance of **Marjorie Fregin**, a Red Seal Chef and our Food Studies teacher this year, students enjoyed baked macaroni and cheese as well as beef fried rice. It is exceptional that we can offer such delicious meals to start the school year, and our foods team is committed to daily lunches. I'm happy to report that we have two very generous sponsors of our program. **Langara Fishing Lodge** recently donated \$12 000 to assist with the coordination of our program. This is the fourth year that the lodge has supported our program. **The Northern Haida Gwaii Medical Staff Association** is also sponsoring our food programs for a second consecutive year. The association, comprised of the doctors and midwives who work out of the hospital in Masset, supports our program from their chronic disease fund and generously gave \$10 000. This funding ensures that good healthy food will be present in our school this year. Haa'wa to our donors and all the student chefs who work to make this amazing program happen."*

THERE IS STRENGTH IN SMALL SCHOOLS

Being a small high school means a combination of grades in both core and elective courses. Our school's combined PE 10 and Fitness & Conditioning 11/12 class is an excellent example of this working well. As per Principal **Ian Keir**,

*"These basketball-focused PE classes allow students to focus on a sport they love and receive additional coaching and learning opportunities. The first few classes happened this week and were a huge success. Haa'wa to **Cal Westbrook** for taking on this class."*

Similarly, Gudangaay Tlaats'Gaa Naay offers a Contemporary Music 10 – 12 class focusing on Haida singing and drumming.

*"This is a new course offering, so our small group is excited to learn together, and they have already written their first song. Haa'wa to **Jaskwaan Bedard**, **Nonnie Louise**, and **Diane York** for their leadership in this class."*

Thanks for sharing how your school's first week has gone, Ian!



SK'AADGAA NAAY ELEMENTARY FIRST WEEK



It was a busy first week at all our schools, but I was able to get to Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary for a quick visit on Thursday, Sept. 8th. We were greeted by the excitement of baby animals arriving at a school. Sk'aadgaa Naay teacher **David Wahl** had brought in two piglets from his farm, and the kids, adults, and truthfully, myself, were pretty excited to have a little visit with both Manuka and Raglan.

I then had a chance to join the youngest learners in the school in singing Sing'gaa Laa in **Mrs. Peerless's** classroom, what fun!

Unlike previous years, Sk'aadgaa Naay hosted a 'Welcome back to school' pancake breakfast on Friday, Sept. 9th, which was well attended. Principal **Leighann Rodger** shared, *"It was so nice to have parents back at our schools as we hadn't been able to do this for the last two years."*

AGNES L. MATHERS ELEMENTARY FIRST WEEK



Principal Will Bedard shared the following:
"Our first week went well. It was great to see the students again and feel their energy."

On Thursday, my class had our first Gud GAA iis (gathering) and talking

circle, then drumming and singing.

Both classes got into the greenhouse and did some work, harvesting and tidying.

We had a beach morning on Friday, where we explored and did station work (paint a landscape, paint name on a rock, Xaayda Kil, (beach and ocean words), tide math lesson, etc."



It sounds like a great first week Will; thanks for sharing!

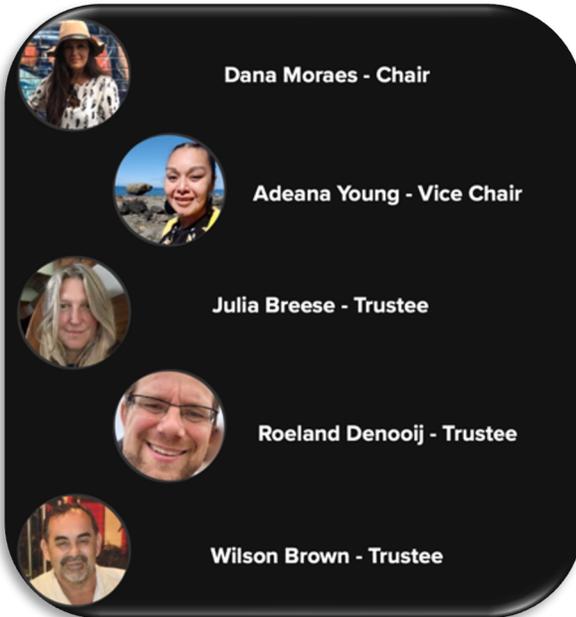
IPADS FOR ELDERS



We are pleased to continue our partnership with the **Council of the Haida Nation** on their iPads for Elders project. The project is intended to help Elders across the Island with little or no online access to connect with others. Steve Goffic, SD50's IT Manager, has assisted the CHN with purchasing and maintaining the iPads for the last two years and recently renewed SD50's commitment to the partnership for the coming two years.



HAWAA / HAW'AA SD50 TRUSTEES



Finally, I would be remiss not to acknowledge and thank current SD50 trustees for their hard work and determination in helping to govern a public school system over the last four years, much of which was taken up by helping to keep schools open within the context of a world pandemic.

Although **Adeana Young, Wilson Brown, Roeland Denooij** and **Dana Moraes** have put their names forward to be considered as trustees for the coming four years, SD50 is saying goodbye to trustee **Julia Breese**. **Julia, thank you for all you have contributed to SD50 and our Board of Education.**

Please encourage your friends and family to vote on Oct. 15th, as the role of a committed Board of Education is vitally important in helping to support public schools.